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(Note: This is one type of memo which the Board might usefully produce in the current situation.)

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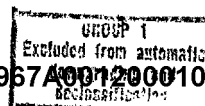
SUBJECT: Factors Affecting a Cessation of Hostilities in the Middle East

A. Soviet Interests

1. Soviet interests are perfectly expressed in their call for an immediate end to the fighting and a return of all military forces to their previous positions. Such an outcome would avoid the risks of great power involvement, and of a serious Arab defeat which would be harmful to the Soviet position. It would salvage Nasser's prestige at a level acceptable to the USSR and leave intact the wave of bitterness toward the US which has swept through the Arab countries. Such an outcome would also head-off the more remote possibility of a smashing Arab victory that would so elevate Nasser's prestige and power as to make him far less dependent on The USSR. Arab unity behind a victorious Nasser is not a Soviet objective in the Middle East.

2. If Israel is not willing to accept a cease fire and to withdraw, the Soviets will probably continue supplying Nasser with arms and military advice designed to make possible a protracted Egyptian resistance. Particularly if the Israeli attack across the Sinai meets substantial resistance, the Soviets

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might judge that Israel would be forced to slacken its efforts within a few weeks and that the Egyptians could hold indefinitely at the canal.

3. The USSR is not likely to associate itself with any diplomatic effort to guarantee free passage of the Straits of Tiron or to resolve fundamentally any of the other sources of Arab-Israeli conflict. Particularly if Israeli military operations are not quickly decisive, it would be more likely to attempt to frustrate any such moves in the UN or elsewhere.

B. Israel

4. Securing free passage of the Straits of Tiron is probably a minimum Israeli objective at present. The more general and important objective is the political one of forcing the collapse of the Nasser government. Short of that, the Israelis probably hope to achieve a sufficient military success to teach the Egyptians and Syrians that 1956 was no fluke; that Israel must be left alone in the future.

5. Israel may also have territorial objectives which will emerge, depending on the success of military operations. These would probably include absorption of Gaza, and rectification of the Syrian order, hold the West bank and a strip of the Sinai down to Sharm-aal-sheik might also follow a decisive military victory.

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C. Egypt

6. Nasser's prime objective at this point is to avoid a military defeat of serious proportions and a backing down from the bold position he assumed in late May. He must fear that failure would drop his prestige in the Arab world well below its low levels of the early 1960's and seriously threaten his own position in Egypt. Much depends on the course of battle in the next few days; if his forces perform well and he sees the possibility of holding out in a prolonged and indecisive war, he will probably insist on a cease-fire without conditions other than the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from his territory.

If the war goes badly in Sinai and his Arab allies prove ineffective, he will have to make a painful choice between absorbing increasingly humiliating military defeats or backing down on the Straits of Tiran issue in some way that satisfies Israel.

Prospects:

An immediate cease-fire is unlikely despite the efforts of the Great Powers. Both Nasser and Israel ~~may~~ feel that critical interests are at stake; neither is likely to back off until the test of arms has revealed a clear trend in strength. Egypt, with Soviet support, may hope for a protracted war of attrition to wear down ~~the~~ the Israelis and obviate the need for any humiliating concessions.

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Even if Nasser suffers a substantial military defeat and loses his leadership role in the Arab world, anti-US sentiment will continue for some time to offer the USSR opportunities to develop its influence in the Middle East.

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